

Bariba language

Bariba, also known as **Baatonum** (also Baatombu, Baatonu, Barba, Barganchi, Bargawa, Bargu, Baruba, Berba, Bogung, and Burgu), is the language of the Bariba people of Benin and Nigeria and was the language of the state of Borgu.

It is primarily spoken in Benin, but also across the border in adjacent Kwara State. Welmers (1952) reported the Bariba language as spoken in Nikki, Parakou, Kandi, and Natitingou.^[3]

Bariba is not closely related to neighbouring languages as a member of the Savannas branch of the Niger–Congo language family.

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Bariba	
<i>baatɔnum</i>	
Native to	Benin, Nigeria
Region	Borgou
Ethnicity	Bariba people
Native speakers	(560,000 cited 1995) ^[1]
Language family	Niger–Congo - Atlantic–Congo - Savannas Bariba
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	bba
Glottolog	baat1238 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/baat1238) ^[2]

Phonology

Bariba is a tonal language.^[4] Tonal patterns in Bariba have been claimed to present a challenge to the Two-Feature Model of tonal phonology.^[5]

Nouns

Bariba has 7 noun classes:

- 1. y-class
- 2. t-class
- 3. g-class
- 4. w-class
- 5. m-class
- 6. s-class
- 7. n-class

The data was collected by William E. Welmers in August and September 1949 at Nikki, Benin.^[3]

y-class

The y-class is the largest noun class. y-class singular nouns usually in -a.

banana	àgèdè (no pl.)
palm tree	bǎǎ
large calabash	bàka
stick	bòra
mosquito	bùěyǎ
character	dàà (no pl.)
tree, wood	dǎǎ (pl.?)
fallen branch	dǎkāmā
branch on a tree	dǎkàsā
root of a tree	dǎkpinā
habit	dēndī (pl.?)
mirror	digí (pl.?)
guinea corn	dobi (pl.?)
gun	dǒbòra
well	dòkò (pl.?)
male	dua
horse	duma
bag	fòròtò, -bá
name of a month	gǎǎní (no pl.)
village gate	gàmbò, -bà
wall	gana
word, matter	gari (pl.?)
termite	géma
driver ant	gěya
gazelle	gina
money	gobi (pl.?)
guinea fowl	gònā
death	gɔɔ (no pl.)
rain, storm	gúra
chicken	guwā, guwē
axe	gbǎǎ
calabash	gbàkáká
lion	gbèsùnɔ̄, gbèsinansu
grain of millet	gbeyā
spirit	hùindè (pl.?)
papaya	kàràbòsì, -bà

motor	kèkε, -bà
animal horn	kɔbā
wildcat	konā
bamboo stalk	kɔ̃sā
antelope	kpása
stew	kpee (no pl.)
star; hippopotamus	kpera
corn cake	másà, -bà
rice sprout	móra
cow	naā
house spider	nára
scorpion	nía
female	nia
mouth	ncɔ (pl.?)
hand	ncɔbū, ncɔma
peanut	sāā
offering	sârâ
bridge	sàsarā
comb	sém̀bù, -ba
hair	serā
covering	sèsèb̀ià
pestle	sobiā
edible seeds	sonki (pl.?)
road, path	súa
fish	sũā
bean	suiā
bracelet	sumā
judgment	tààε (pl.?)
tobacco	tába
ant	tànā
mud brick	tè̀ndóka
self	tīī
bee	tīya
inheritance	túbí (pl.?)
snake	waā
rope	wěya
straw	wíya, wĩĩ

law	wodà
small gray monkey	wonkéra
gold	wúra (no pl.)
face	wurusuā, -ē
animal, meat	yaa
needle	yabúra
cloth, robe	yasa
spear	yàsa/yèsa
pepper	yě̀ě̀kú (no pl.)
evil spirit	zínì

t-class

All forms end in -ru for t-class nouns.

cutlass	àdaru
dysentery	bàhndúbàhndū
sickness	baràrū
tension drum	bàraru
doorway	bàràrū
shoe	bàràrū (only pl.)
cloth	bekùrū
basket	bíréru
back	biru
salt	bòrū
river	daaru
loincloth	demberu
house	dìrū
tooth	donda
stalk	gānā̃rū
arm	gāsèrū
rat	gɔŋɔru
large wild rat	gònòh̃guru
egg	goòsī̃rū
mountain	guru
rain cloud	gúrúwuru
(musical) horn	guùrū
crow	gbāgbā̃rū
field, farm	gbèrū
pot	gbé̃ru
gourd	kaaru
bush cow	kètègbèèkìrū
male (of some animals)	kìnèrū
bread	kìràrū
love	kí̃ru
stool	kìtārū
box	kpàkoruru
stone	kpèrū
bed	kpenyeru
bone	kukuru
a swelling	mɔsìrū
odor	nubùrū

rabbit	satàbũĩũ
pitfall	sẽrũ
brass, copper	sigàndũ
grave	sìkìrũ
tail	siru
stinkbug	sísíkènèrũ
pounded yam	sòkùrũ
work	sòmbùrũ
clay for pots	sɔ̀ndũ
mortar	soru
porridge	sòrũ
toad	suréru
leg	taaru
garden hill	takàrũ
bow	tendu
panther	túndũ
nose	wẽru
head	wiru
neck	wíyìrũ
knife	wobùrũ
pot	wókeru
night, darkness	wǝ̀kùrũ
baboon	wompɔ̀kɔ̀ru
red monkey	wónsùǎ̀rũ
coldness	wòòrũ
sheep	yǎǎ̀rũ
market	yàburu
sacrifice	yǎ̀kùrũ
place	yanyeeru
open space	yeeru
broom	yìrũ
name	yísìrũ
frog	yǝ̀ǝ̀ru

g-class

Forms usually end in back vowels for g-class nouns.

chameleon	àgāmānàkí, -bà
onion	àlùmásà, -nu
goat	boo, bonu
water pot	bòo, -nu
dog	bṣṣ, bṣnu
owl	booro, -su
lizard	bḍsu, -nu
infestation of lice	gǎǎní (pl.?)
louse	gǎǎnúkú, -nù
airplane	gogùnḍ, -su
robe	gṣkɔ, -su
drum	gṣṣ, gǎǎsu
vehicle	gòo, -su
canoe	gòoninkū, -nu
bird	gùnṣ, -su
cricket	gbɔṣ, -nu
sandfly	kòtókámbu, -munu
spoon	kààtó, -nù
cat	kòkónyambu, -munu
doorway	kónḍɔ, -su
mat	kṣṣ, -su
pig	kúrúsṣ, -su
partridge	kusu, -nu
leopard, cat	músúkú, -nù
antelope	nemū, neḥnu
eye	nɔnu, nɔni
bush hog	sàkṣ, -nu
trap	sékpèḥkú, -nù
arrow	sěũ, sěḥnu
pot	sirū, -su
fly	sɔnu, -su
ear	so / soa, -su
elephant	sùùnū, -su
ring	tààbu, -nu
small black ant	tàm̃bu, -munu
army ant	tàsonu, -su

hoe	tebo, -nu
shadow	tíro, -nu
parrot	titimokò, -nu
year	wĩĩn, wĩsu
monkey	womu, wonnu
wind	woo, -nu
hole	worũ, -su
town	wuu, -su
rabbit	wùkũ, -nu
leaf	wurũ, -su
tongue	yara, -nu
vulture	yèbèrèkú, -nù
household	yenu, -su
hartebeest	yiiku, -nu

w-class

father	bàa
Bariba person or language	bàtònù
older brother, friend	bɛɛɛ
child	bī
ulcer	bòō
hunter	bɔso
fire	dǔǔ
mother's brother	dùàni
rich man	gobigi
person	goo
pregnant woman	guràgi
God	gúsūn̄
guard	kɔso
mother	merō
older brother	mɔ̄
paramount chief	sènàboko
sister	sesu
sun, day	sɔ̄
chief	sùn̄, sìnambu
moon, month	surú
person	tònū, tòn̄bu
younger brother	wɔ̄n̄
guardian spirit	yǎrō
slave	yòō
enemy	yíbèrè

m-class

m-class nouns often end in -m.

language	bàrūṁ
milk	bom
strength	dam
oil	gum
raised garden row	kòrṓṁ
water	nim
liquor	tam
ground, dirt	tem
medicine	tīm
honey	tim
soap	werem
air	wom
space, room	yam
sand	yànīm
blood	yem

s-class

The s-class is a small noun class. Most forms are collectives and end in -su.

one (yam)	tan (teèsū)
foot	naàsu
silver	sigeèsū
iron	sísú
cotton	wěsu
grass, the bush	yàkàsu

n-class

The n-class is a small noun class. Most forms are collectives and end in -nu.

one	teènū
greens	àfonu
thing	gáánu
necklace	goònū
corn	gbèrɛnu
cucumber	gbèzɛnu
okra	yàbonu

Verbs

Aspects

There are 7 primary verb aspects in Bariba:^[3]

- consecutive
- habitual
- continuative
- frequentative
- imperative
- past
- past negative

There are 5 verb classes, which are grouped according to the formation of the past aspect.

List of verbs

Consecutive verb forms are given below. *S* denotes stative forms.

get sick	bārā
split	bērā
push	bōrā
dawn, whiten	būrūrā, S burīrī
taste	dēndā
pass by	dōōnā
sell	dōōrā
sleep	dūīā, S dò
come in	dūmā
pull	gāwā
chase	gīrā
beseech	kānā
break (rope)	kārā
shatter	kōōrā
loosen	kūsīā
lie down	kpūnā, S kpĩ
receive	mūā
burn	mūārā
fight	sāñnā
become clean	sārā
name, call	sīā
pick up	sūā
wash	tīā
become black	tĩĩrā, S tĩrī
arrive	tūnūmā
fall	wōrūmā
fill	yībīā
meet	yīñnā
stop	yōōrā
leave	dērī
eat	dī (Cont. di)
forget	dūārī
hurt by burning	mēñī
help	sōmī
increase	sōsī
tether	sōrī
take a long time	tē

hand over	wĕ̃
blow (air)	wūrī
throw away	yārī
lay down	yī
become hard	bɔ̃biā, S bɔ̃(bū)
become fat	bɔ̃riā, S bɔ̃rū
become much	dabiā, S dabī
catch up with	deēmā
become long	dě̃nyā, S dē̃
become deep	dukiā, S dúku
learn	giā
turn over	gɔ̃siā
turn around	gɔ̃sirā
gather	gurā
become high, tall	guriā, S gúru
open	kɛ̃nīā
get down	sarā
become difficult	sě̃siā, S sĕ̃
sit down	sinā, S sĭ̃
become bitter	sosiā, S sō(sū)
become red	sũērā, S sũērī
become tough	taà̃yā, S tā̃
become wide	yasiā, S yasū
become cold, damp	yemiā, S yēm̃
fire (a gun)	suē
touch	babā
go around	besirā
break in two	buā
cut in two	burā
do become sweet	dorā, S
catch	gabā
become dry	gberā
tear	gĩā̃
scratch	gĩrā
want	kĩā̃, S kí
cut up	murā

jump, drop	surā
draw up	takā
bring	tamā
become good	wēṛā, S wā
believe	wurā
come back	wúrāmā
pierce	yabā
remember	yayā
play	duē
become clean	déṛā
become big	kpéyā, S kpá
become hot	súyā, S suṁ
become clear	déérē
look for	kásū
show	sńńsĩ
warm oneself	wńsū
cover	wukírī
peel	kēṛī
chew, eat	tēm
plant	dūūrē
separate	gɔsi
dig	gbe
wait	ma, maru
study	mɛɛri
fall (of rain)	nɛ
leave, walk	sĩ
call	soku
be enough, arrive	turi
see	wa
answer	wisi
measure	yĩre
hear	nô
fix up	sɔmè, sɔm
dye black	wɔ̀kù
dance	yâ
enter, hurt	dū
flow	kōkū

stand up	sē, S yǎ
climb	yǎ
shine	baàlì
count	garì
rot	kǎsì
give birth to	mâ, marù
swell	mɔsì
rejoice	yě ěrì
buy	dūē
give	kě
build	bānī
steal	gbēnī
prick	sǎkū
tell	sǎ
put on the head	sɔbe, sɔ
fry	sɔmɛ, sɔm
?	su
fly	yǎ
tie up	bǎkē
sew	yīnē
speak, say	gere
close	kɛnè
hide	kukè
frighten	narè
cook	yikè
write	yǎrì
do, make	kō, S mǎ
kill	gō
throw down	kǎ
finish	kpê
hit	sō

Adjectives

Invariable adjectives:^[3]

male	dɔ, dua
raw	goma
high	gbārã
white	kaà
a little bit	pikó
narrow	tereré
difficult	sěsɔ

Adjectives with a class of their own, which remains the same after all nouns; singular and plural forms are like those of nouns:

t-class adjectives:

some, a few (pl. only)	binu
much, many	dabīrū
dead	gorū
male (of certain animals)	kìnèrū
old	tòkɔrū
short, small (also g-class)	kpirìrū

g-class adjectives:

small	yǎkàbū
small	píbu
short, small (also t-class)	kpirìbū

Attributive adjectives with alternants for each noun class:

1. Bariba (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/bba/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Baatonum" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/baat1238>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Welmers, William E. 1952. Notes on Bariba. *Language* 28: 82-103.
4. N.L. Haddock (1959) The tones of Bariba *Phonetica* 3:90-94
5. Clements, Michaud, and Patin, Do we need tone features? In *Tones and features: phonetic and phonological perspectives*, Goldsmith, Hume, and Whetzels, editors

External links

- [Baatonum](http://www.wolframalpha.com/input/?i=Baatonum) (<http://www.wolframalpha.com/input/?i=Baatonum>) at [WolframAlpha](#)
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